



LEGAL AID SOCIETY

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LEGAL AID LAUNCHES NEW PROJECT TO HELP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Louisville, KY—The Legal Aid Society announces the launch of the Domestic Violence Advocacy Program, a project that provides free legal help at Domestic Violence Order (DVO) hearings to low-income victims of domestic violence in Jefferson County.

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Program was created in recognition that victims are more likely to return to their abusers when they do not have access to sufficient support. The project meets victims at their point of need, provides the legal support necessary to prevent further abuse, and shifts the burden of presenting evidence in court from a vulnerable victim to a trained attorney.

Clients may apply for this service at the time they file for a DVO at the courthouse.

A DVO (sometimes referred to as a protective order) may require the abuser to vacate the residence and/or terminate contact with the victim and her family.

"I'm grateful for the incredibly positive response this initiative has received from the Legal Aid Society in their decision to administer the program. I'm also grateful so many lawyers in this community recognize the need and are generously donating their professional time to provide representation. From managing partners to the newest lawyer, victims of domestic violence will have effective, trained advocates in court," said Senior Judge Ann Shake, who was instrumental in developing this project with Legal Aid.

Judge Shake continued, "Courts will be significantly aided in their search for the truth and victims will be more likely to receive protection and justice. The goal is to save lives.



Death by intimate partner violence is the seventh leading cause of premature death among women in this country."

Thirteen local law firms and many members of the private bar have volunteered to provide pro bono representation to victims at DVO hearings. Firms who have committed significant pro bono resources include:

Boehl Stopher & Graves
Dinsmore & Shohl
Dodd & Dodd Attorneys
Frost Brown Todd
Goldberg Simpson
Greenebaum Doll & McDonald
Lynch, Cox, Gilman & Mahan
Morgan & Pottinger
Phillips Parker Orberon & Moore
Stites & Harbison
Stoll Keenon Ogden
Weber & Rose
Woodward, Hobson & Fulton
Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs

"The Legal Aid Society is grateful for the support this important project has received from our local legal community," said Neva-Marie Polley, managing attorney of the Domestic Violence Advocacy Program at Legal Aid. "Thanks to the many attorneys who have already volunteered their time and talent to this project, we are improving our system of justice by protecting the poor and vulnerable."

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Program was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Legal Aid Society, the Mary Byron Foundation, the Center for Women and Families, the Louisville Bar Association, the Louisville Bar Association Family Law Section, the Pro Bono Consortium, Stites & Harbison, the Jefferson County Attorney's Office, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, Metro Government Office for Women, the Office of the Circuit Court Clerk of Jefferson County, and the Mortality Review Committee.

Verizon Wireless, in partnership with Legal Aid Society, has provided generous financial support for the development and implementation of this project.

The mission of the Legal Aid Society is to pursue justice for people in poverty. Legal Aid provides free legal services to low-income families and individuals facing serious threats to their physical and economic well-being. Those assisted include the elderly, children, victims of domestic violence, and other vulnerable groups. For more information, visit Legal Aid's website at www.laslou.org.

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